

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00

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FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2665

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, AS

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: PROPOSED BRITISH AIRWAYS CONCORDE LONDON-
MELBOURNE SERVICE

1. SUMMARY: IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN OFFICER, BRITISH CIVIL AIR ATTACHE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY APPROVE BRITISH AIRCRAFT CORPORATION'S/(BAC) PROPOSED PROGRAM OF TEST FLIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA, NOW TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JULY/AUGUST 1975. ATTACHE EXPRESSED UNCERTAINTY, HOWEVER, CONCERNING EVENTUAL AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT APPROVAL FOR ACTUAL AIRLINE SERVICE, WHICH BRITISH AIRWAYS WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN IN FIRST HALF CY 76. UNCERTAINTY STEMS FROM UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL/TECHNICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC AREAS, WITH NOISE POLLUTION AND POSSIBLE QANTAS REVENUE LOSSES LOOMING AS MAIN STUMBLING BLOCKS TO GOA POSITIVE RESPONSE TO BA LONDON-MELBOURNE SERVICE. END SUMMARY.

2. ATTACHE DISCOUNTED POTENTIAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING HIGH
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ATMOSPHERE OZONE DEPLETION AND POLLUTION, AND LOW-LEVEL SMOKE

EMISSIONS, CAUSED BY CONCORDE, BUT SAID, HOWEVER, THAT NOISE WAS STILL A CRUCIAL PROBLEM. ON TECHNICAL SIDE, CONCORDE ENGINEERS COULD MAKE NO FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN PERCEIVED DECIBEL LEVELS WITHOUT DEVELOPING A COMPLETELY NEW ENGINE - WHICH WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. NOISE, THEREFORE, WAS STILL A BIG QUESTION MARK, WHICH EFFECTIVELY CURTAILS CONCORDE OPERATIONS AT AIRPORTS WITH SIGNIFICANT NOISE SENSITIVITY, SUCH AS SYDNEY. AS FAR AS SONIC BOOM CONCERNED, PROBLEM AT PRESENT TECHNICALLY INSOLUBLE, BUT WOULD AFFECT ONLY ABOUT 200 PEOPLE, AS CONCORDE PASSED OVER SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST DESOLATE AND UNPOPULATED AREAS.

3. BRITISH EXPERT COULD FORESEE SERIOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES IF CONCORDE "SKIMMED THE CREAM OFF" (I.E. TOOK EFFECTIVELY ALL). THE FIRST CLASS MELBOURNE/LONDON TRAFFIC, AS HE FELT IT WOULD, QANTAS WOULD THEN SEEK TO OBTAIN SOME SORT OF FINANCIAL CONCESSIONS FROM BA (WHICH, HE IMPLIED, COULD BE ARRANGED), UTILIZING THE BA-QANTAS POOLING AGREEMENTS AS RATIONALE FOR APPLICATION OF PRESSURE ON BA.

4. IF LABOR CONTINUED IN POWER, ATTACHE NOTED THAT THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DANGER OF AN "ANTI-"SILVERTAIL" ARGUMENT GAINING GREATER CREDENCE (I.E. "WHY SUBSIDIZE A LUXURY MEANS OF TRANSPORT FOR THE RICH?"). IN FACT, HE MAINTAINED NO SUBSIDY, OR INCREASED COSTS OF ANY KIND WOULD BE NEEDED TO BEGIN CONCORDE SERVICE, SINCE THE AIRCRAFT WILL REQUIRE NO SPECIAL GROUND HANDLING EQUIPMENT OR CHANGES IN TERMINAL FACILITIES. ATTACHE COULD NOT PREDICT WHETHER OR NOT THIS ARGUMENT WOULD PROVE TO BE A PROBLEM, BUT FELT THAT IT WAS A LESSER CONCERN THAN THE NOISE AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

5. POSSIBLE PAA USE OF SUPERSONICS: WALKER THOUGHT THAT BRITISH AIRWAYS (BA) SERVICE TO NYC WOULD, AGAIN, "SKIM THE CREAM OFF" NORTH ATLANTIC RUN, IF LONDON-NYC APPROVAL WAS EVER GRANTED. HE FELT PAA WOULD HAVE TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER POSSIBLE USE OF IRANIAN CONCORDES TO MATCH BA SERVICE. FURTHERMORE, SUCH ATLANTIC SUPERSONIC EXPERIENCE COULD CONVINCE PAA TO TRY A PACIFIC RUN FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO SYDNEY. ASIDE FROM POSSIBLE NOISE ABATEMENT PROBLEMS IN HONOLULU, THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SERVICE COULD BE VERY VIABLE, CUTTING TRAVEL TIME TO APPROXIMATELY TEN HOURS. SERVICE WOULD OPERATE FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO SYDNEY, WITH HONOLULU AND NADI AS INTERMEDIATES.
BRAND

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